

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-37 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 27 are amended, and claims 35-37 are added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims and the drawings.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the personal interview conducted on July 10, 2007. The substance of the interview, including any agreements reached, is reflected in the above amendments and the following remarks. Withdrawal of the rejections is thus respectfully requested.

I. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

A. White and Chioffi

The Office Action rejects claims 1-11 and 16-34 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 3,520,568 to White et al. (hereinafter "White"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,082,787 to Chioffi et al. (hereinafter "Chioffi"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a dryer which includes an apparatus configured to releasably engage a door and a housing. The apparatus includes, *inter alia*, a pair of holders positioned in a latch body so as to confront each other, wherein the pair of holders is configured to engage and hold a hanging portion of a hook provided at one side of the door when the door is closed, and to release the hanging portion when the door is opened. Independent claim 27 recites similar features in varying scope. As acknowledged in the Office Action, White alone neither discloses nor suggests each of the features of independent claims 1 and 27, or the

respective claimed combinations of features. Accordingly, White is combined with Chioffi in the Office Action, Chioffi allegedly teaching a pair of holders that releasably hold a hanging portion, a pair of springs, and a pair of support members. However, as discussed during the personal interview, Chioffi fails to overcome the deficiencies of White.

Chioffi discloses a device 1 for locking a door P of an appliance. The device 1 includes a support housing 2 and an engagement member A that is inserted into and removed from the housing 2 through an aperture 3. When the door P is open, a retainer 4 slidably mounted in the housing 2 is held in a rest position by a spring 6, and the appliance cannot be operated. When the engagement member A is inserted into the aperture 3 to close the door P, a corner of a hook portion 21 of the engagement member is caught by a corner of the aperture 3, thus compressing the spring 6.

The housing 2 also includes upper and lower stops 8 and 9 having locking projections 8a and 9a. When the door P is open and the retainer 4 is at rest, the locking projections 8a and 9a are aligned with notches 12 and 13, thus restricting movement of the retainer 4 and blocking access to the interior of the support housing 2 (see column 3, lines 53-67 and Figure 4 of Chioffi). Insertion of the engagement member A forces beveled end portions 8b and 9b of the stops 8 and 9 apart, thus releasing the locking projections 8a and 8b from the notches 12 and 13 and allowing the retainer 4 to move (see column 4, lines 5-18 and Figure 7 of Chioffi). Chioffi further discloses that the aperture 3 also includes a projection 20 that engages a lateral recess formed in the hook portion 21 of the engagement member A when the door P is closed. The

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projection 20 further inhibits movement of the retainer 4 from the rest position to the work position (see column 4, lines 25-32 and Figures 3 and 6 of Chioffi).

Chioffi clearly discloses that the stops 8 and 9 (compared in the Office Action to the claimed holders), and in particular, the locking projections 8a and 9a, engage and hold the retainer 4, not the engagement member A (compared in the Office Action to the claimed hook). Chioffi neither discloses nor suggests that the stops 8 and 9 and/or projections 8a and 9a in any way hold or engage the engagement member A and/or the hook portion 21 of the engagement member A (compared in the Office Action to the claimed hook and hanging portion). Thus, Chioffi neither discloses nor suggests a pair of holders, or at least one holder, configured to releasably hold a hanging portion as recited in independent claims 1 and 27, respectively.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 27 are allowable over the applied combination, and thus the rejection of independent claims 1 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White and Chioffi should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2-11, 16-26 and 28-34 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 27, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

B. White and Saunders

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9, 11-17 and 19-34 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White, in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,869,952 to Saunders (hereinafter “Saunders”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The features of independent claims 1 and 27 are discussed above. As acknowledged in

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the Office Action, White alone neither discloses nor suggests each of the features of independent claims 1 and 27, or the respective claimed combinations of features. Accordingly, White is combined with Saunders in the Office Action, Saunders allegedly teaching a pair of holders that releasably hold a hanging portion, a pair of springs, and a pair of support members. However, as discussed during the personal interview, Saunders fails to overcome the deficiencies of White.

Saunders discloses a door latch for a refrigerator, including a striker 29 that extends from a door 12 into a latch casing 31. A pair of retainers 36 each extend between a pair of pivot pins 38 and 39, with coil springs 47 surrounding each retainer 36. A U-shaped arm 41 is pivotably attached at each pivot pin 39, with rollers 42 and 44 at its opposite ends, thus allowing the arms 41 to pivot as the striker 29 is inserted into or removed from the latch and the springs 47 are extended or compressed. The movement of the arms 41, retainers 36, and springs 47 surrounding the retainers 36 is all circular or pivotal. Saunders neither discloses nor suggests that the pivot pins 38 and 39, arms 41 and rollers 42, 44 (combined together and compared in the Office Action to the recited holders) translate longitudinally within the latch, as do the holders recited in independent claims 1 and 27. Rather, Saunders clearly discloses that these elements work together to rotate about the pivot pin 39 and allow entry and removal of the striker 29. Thus, Saunders neither discloses a pair of holders, or at least one holder, that translates longitudinally within the latch body so as to engage or disengage a hanging portion, as recited in independent claims 1 and 27, respectively.

The Office Action asserts that the retainers 36 are comparable to the claimed holders. However, as discussed during the personal interview, each end of each retainer 36 is pivotably mounted at the pivot pins 38 and 39, with the springs 47 surrounding the retainers 36. Thus, the springs 47 clearly must also rotate as they are extended or compressed through the action of the striker 29. Saunders neither discloses nor suggests that the springs 47 remain stable as the retainers 36 rotate. Thus, Saunders neither discloses nor suggests a pair of support members, or at least one support member, that support rear portions of the springs so that the springs remain stable as the holders move, as recited in independent claims 1 and 27, respectively.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 27 are allowable over the applied combination, and thus the rejection of independent claims 1 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White and Saunders should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2-9, 11-17, 19-26 and 28-34 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 27, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

C. White, Chioffi, Cravener and Fleming

The Office Action rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White, in view of Chioffi, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,489,864 to Cravener (hereinafter "Cravener"). The Office Action also rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White, in view of Chioffi, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,480,862 to Fleming (hereinafter "Fleming"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Dependent claims 14 and 15 are allowable over White and Chioffi for at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for their added features. Further, Cravener is merely cited as allegedly teaching the use of bolts, and Fleming is merely cited as allegedly teaching a fixing plate screw coupled to one side of a door jamb. Thus, Cravener and Fleming, either alone or in combination, fail to overcome the deficiencies of White and Chioffi as established above with respect to independent claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14 and 15 are allowable over the respective applied combinations, and thus the rejection of claims 14 and 15 should be withdrawn.

II. New Claims 35-37

New claims 35-37 are added to the application. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 35-37 meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, and are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 27, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, Joanna K. Mason, at the telephone number listed below.

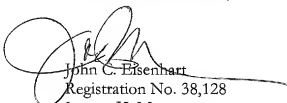
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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
KED & ASSOCIATES, LLP



John C. Eisenhart
Registration No. 38,128
Joanna K. Mason
Registration No. 56,408

P.O. Box 221200
Chantilly, Virginia 20153-1200
(703) 766-3777 JCE:JKM:lhd

Date: August 6, 2007

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Please direct all correspondence to Customer Number 34610